

**From:** [Mylott, Richard](#)  
**To:** [Ostrander, David](#)  
**Subject:** FW: My apologies in advance  
**Date:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 4:13:50 PM

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fyi

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**From:** Wyatt, Kristen [<mailto:kwyatt@ap.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 4:11 PM  
**To:** Mylott, Richard  
**Subject:** RE: My apologies in advance

Bless you!

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**From:** Mylott, Richard [<mailto:Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 4:11 PM  
**To:** Wyatt, Kristen  
**Subject:** RE: My apologies in advance

Steps have been taken to secure drinking water and the county is advising people to avoid recreational contact with the river. Those measures put us in a good place in terms of human health and exposure and we will be carefully assessing water quality over the next several days, including any impacts to fish and aquatic life.

Rich

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**From:** Wyatt, Kristen [<mailto:kwyatt@ap.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 4:00 PM  
**To:** Mylott, Richard  
**Subject:** My apologies in advance

My editor is losing his shit, I'm so sorry but anything more you can tell me? Basically he is freaking out wanting to know what are human health impacts.

3:52 PM Anderson, Jim

Kristen: SOMEONE has to say are they cleaning it or will it dissipate? Now that it's in NM others downstream (and on the call) knew of it.  
orange sludge, that is.

3:53 PM Wyatt, Kristen

this is EPA

We're sampling water and assessing impacts to the Animas River today. We know it contains a lot of sediment. We'll be looking closely at acidity and metals as well. Drinking water operators and other users downstream were notified by CDPHE yesterday so they could take steps to shut intakes. We recommended that the county advise people to avoid contact with the river. Our assessment work today and moving forward will generate information about when that advisory can be lifted.

i dont know what you mean by "clean it"

they say they are testing and will advise

3:55 PM Anderson, Jim

we can ask other states to call too -- NM or UT -- they volunteered to do so. Doesnt answer whether it needs to be contained or will dissipate as it moves downriver?

3:55 PMWyatt, Kristen

i dont think it would be possible to "contain it" i'm sorry i just dont know what you mean

3:55 PMAnderson, Jim

Kristen the EPA statement is bullshit. What health danger is there and how far downstream does it apply?

3:56 PMWyatt, Kristen

i will ask him again

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**From:** Mylott, Richard [<mailto:Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 2:59 PM  
**To:** Wyatt, Kristen  
**Subject:** RE: August 6 EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release

Kristen—

EPA's cleanup team was working with heavy equipment to secure and consolidate an entrance to the mine and access contaminated water. The project was intended to pump and treat the water and reduce metals pollution flowing out of the mine into the Cement Creek watershed.

We're sampling water and assessing impacts to the Animas River today. We know it contains a lot of sediment. We'll be looking closely at acidity and metals as well. Drinking water operators and other users downstream were notified by CDPHE yesterday so they could take steps to shut intakes. We recommended that the county advise people to avoid contact with the river. Our assessment work today and moving forward will generate information about when that advisory can be lifted.

Rich Mylott

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**From:** Wyatt, Kristen [<mailto:kwyatt@ap.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 2:36 PM  
**To:** Mylott, Richard  
**Cc:** Anderson, Jim  
**Subject:** RE: August 6 EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release

Hi, my editors need to know

-what is in the spill? More detail besides "metal and sediment"?

-any more details about what the EPA team was doing when yall caused the spill?

-any health concerns for folks downstream of Durango? How long till it dissipates to the point there won't be health warnings to avoid the water?

Even if you don't have answers to this stuff, editors are pressing for an update. As you can imagine multiple states are very interested in this story so would appreciate a call soonest 303-825-0123.

Kristen

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**From:** Mylott, Richard [<mailto:Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 11:42 AM  
**To:** Mylott, Richard  
**Subject:** August 6 EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release

Thanks for your call regarding the Gold King mine release. EPA statement below. I expect to have more information this afternoon.

Rich Mylott  
Office of Communications  
USEPA Region 8  
303-312-6654

### **August 6 EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release**

Yesterday, an EPA team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colo. unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately 1M gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

Following the release, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment notified water users downstream so they could take appropriate steps to turn off intakes until the contaminated water passes.

The primary environmental concern is the pulse of contaminated water containing sediment and metals flowing as an orange-colored discharge downstream through Cement Creek and into the Animas River. The water associated with the release is obvious and highly discolored. As a precaution, EPA recommends that recreational users of the Animas River avoid contact with or use of the river until the pulse of mine water passes. Over the next several days, EPA teams will be sampling and investigating downstream locations to confirm that the release has passed and poses no additional concerns for aquatic life or water users. EPA will also be assessing damage near the mine portal and any residual releases of water at the mine site.

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